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J. BROOKS. A DISCOURSE. 1795





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A  
DISCOURSE  
DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

9th JUNE, 1795.

BY JOHN BROOKS, A.A. & M.M.S.



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BOSTON:  
PRINTED BY T. FLEET, JUN. AT THE BIBLE & HEART, CORNHILL.

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MDCCXCV.



*At a Semiannual Meeting of the HUMANE SOCIETY,  
BOSTON, June 9th, 1795.*

VOTED, THAT *the* PRESIDENT, *first* VICE PRESIDENT, *second* VICE PRESIDENT, HON. JUDGE SUMNER, and the HON. WILLIAM SHEPARD, Esq; be a Committee to wait upon the HON. JOHN BROOKS Esq; and return him the thanks of this Society for his ingenious and elegant Discourse delivered this day; and to request of him a copy for the Press.

*True Copy of Record,*

*Attest.*

JOHN AVERY, jun. Rec. Secretary.

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BOSTON, June 9th, 1795.

GENTLEMEN,

I feel myself highly honoured by the vote of the Humane Society, which you have been pleased so politely to communicate. A copy of the Discourse is herewith inclosed, and respectfully submitted to your disposal. In addition to my earnest wishes for the success of the Institution, be pleased to accept of the assurances of respect with which I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

JOHN BROOKS.

HON. THOMAS RUSSELL, Esq.

JONATHAN MASON, Esq.

JOHN WARREN, M. D.

HON. JUDGE SUMNER.

HON. WILLIAM SHEPARD, Esq.

} Committee.

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D I S C O U R S E, &c.

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MR. PRESIDENT,

AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY.

**Y**OUR Institution, which has invited us hither at this time, presents itself to us in a twofold light. While it is calculated to awaken and invigorate some of the best principles of the heart, it contemplates the relations which subsist between the human body and the various objects by which it is surrounded.

To explain the moral branch of the institution and to inculcate the precepts of it, are among the pleasing duties which fall within the province of another profession, whose learning and eloquence, I may with confidence add, will ever be employed in diffusing a spirit of genuine benevolence



volence and philanthropy. It will therefore be more congenial with your wishes, and my profession, to employ a few of the present moments in some considerations relating to medical science. And as from the lessons of experience we frequently derive the most powerful correctives, a general, though cursory view of the past state of the healing art, may not prove unprofitable, although the speaker has such slight claims to the talent of rendering it pleasing. The subject may afford motives to prompt the physician and the philosopher to the pursuit of those means, which have a tendency to develop the relations subsisting between the different parts of the great system of nature, which fall within their cognizance, and thereby to improve not only the state of medical knowledge, but that of physics in general.

WHEN we consider, that mankind have at all times been susceptible of disease and accident—when we consider their natural aversion to pain, and the avidity with which a freedom from it is sought—when we consider further, the inquisitive nature of man, and the opportunity he has had fully to indulge the exercise of this propensity, we are ready to wonder at the slow progress of the healing art, and at the imperfect state in which we find it. But more deliberate reflection will place this subject in a juster light. For, when, on the other hand, we reflect on the infinitely complex and delicate structure of the human body, and the



the corresponding variety and degrees of disease and accident to which it is liable—when we reflect on the endless relations and connections which subsist between the body and the other parts of the system of nature, and that the result of these relations is ascertainable only by observation and experiment—to which considerations, if we add the shortness of life, and the circumscribed nature of the human faculties, we must acknowledge that these impediments to the progress of the art, although they arise necessarily from the nature of things, are truly formidable. We may however, with confidence observe, that, had these been the only impediments the art has had to encounter, the present state of it must have been much more perfect than it actually is. But to the above enumerated natural impediments, we must superadd others, which, though accidental and factitious, are numerous and influential.

PHILOSOPHY, of which medicine is an important branch, has at different periods of time, been opposed and depressed by some of the most active and powerful passions of the human heart—and superstition, fanaticism, and tyranny have, with alacrity, lent their aid in the inglorious work.

In the wars and revolutions which have perpetually agitated the world, do we not discern powerful instruments of retardation, not only in medical, but in general science? The shocks and convulsions of states and empires, if they do



do not seduce men by the glare of arms, the pomp of war, or the pride of command, to participate in scenes of blood and carnage, at least, destroy that steady composure of intellect so indispensably requisite for the successful pursuit of scientific investigation. Those eventful moments raise and inflame the angry passions, disengage the mind from its most rational pursuits, and fix it with earnest solicitude on the means of safety, or of revenge. Few men could, like Archimedes, continue the solution of a geometrical problem under the terrors of the sword, or like a late European chemist, when under capital sentence, solicit a short reprieve, that he might *only* be indulged the opportunity of communicating a professional discovery.

IN connection with these causes, and indeed as incidental thereto, the frequent wanton and indiscriminate destruction of books and other monuments of learning, obtrudes itself upon the reluctant mind. Who can recollect without indignant emotion, the fate of that noble and stupendous collection of ancient learning, destroyed by the mercenary legions of the first Cæsar? Or the similar destruction in the same ill-fated city, though at a much later period, by the blind fanaticism of a ferocious superstition? Who can estimate the loss sustained by philosophy in these unparrelled instances of literary devastation? The most correct information leads us to deplore, in these two instances, the conflagration of at least, nine hundred thousand books, at a time when the art of printing



printing was unknown, and when most probably, in numerous instances, the rich result of a whole life devoted to physical research, was compressed into a solitary volume.

BUT another impediment to philosophical improvement has been the constant and almost universal passion for speculative and hypothetical systems. On the science of metaphysics, philosophers may indulge themselves perhaps innocently in speculating unintelligibly or even absurdly to an extreme; because mankind will not be affected by the issue. Notwithstanding the celebrated Bishop Berkley and Mr. Hume, exerted all their ingenuity and art to excite a belief in the non-existence of a material world, they seem in practice to have disregarded their own theory; and to have governed themselves by the maxims of prudence, and the principles of common sense. But in medicine, which is a practical art, as well as a liberal science, the same observations will not apply. A false theory, like an *ignis fatuus*, may mislead and bewilder the physician, and consequently prove fatal to thousands.

PREEMINENT talents have seldom failed to command the respect and applause of the world; and nothing has been considered as demonstrating the reality of such talents so incontestably as original invention. The talent of invention imposes itself upon the world as a creative faculty. Hence men of genius and ambition, disdaining the humble  
and



and progressive method of acquiring knowledge by observation, experiment and induction, have been tempted, by bold and daring flights of the imagination, to leap the bounds of nature—and thus, conjecture has been substituted for demonstration, and hypothesis for truth.

WHENEVER a system is invented, however irrational in itself, or to what consequences soever it may tend, pride and a variety of auxiliary passions are engaged in its support. For although a fondness for knowledge, and a love of truth be natural to the human understanding, the passions are sometimes found to be hostile to both. How often indeed, has pride, vanity, avarice or party zeal, been seen to control the judgment, and subdue the man! But it will be less useful and less adapted to our present purpose, to analyze this propensity, than to consider its effects, and guard ourselves against its influence.

THE history of medicine, and of many other branches of science, furnishes us with a specific detail of the successive triumphs, not of truth, but of one system of speculative error over another.

THE philosophy of Pythagoras yielded to that of Aristotle, which, though a system of unfounded conjectures, was the popular philosophical creed till Des Cartes, by assumptions equally bold and unwarranted, triumphed at once over the prejudices of the world, and the long established theory  
of



of the Grecian Lycæum. The vortices of the ingenious Gallican theorist, it is true, have long since been subverted by the power of truth, and the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton ; who, to adopt the language of a celebrated astronomer, “ has established a system on such an everlasting foundation of mathematical and physical demonstration, “ as can never be shaken.” But even under the powerful light of the Newtonian principles, attempts have not been wanting to introduce philosophical chimeras.

REVOLUTIONS in medicine have been analogous to those of its sister science. Until about four hundred years before the christian æra, the history of medicine is obscure and indistinct. The active industry and watchful diligence of Hippocrates enabled him to collect the improvements, which time and observation had made in the healing art. But the method of Hippocrates, though founded in nature, as it exacted the exercise of patient, and sometimes painful diligence, was soon forsaken, and romantic conjecture introduced in its stead. The precepts of this so justly celebrated physician were derided, his practice was proscribed, and the medical world was divided into a variety of sects, characterized by a blind devotion to their own peculiarities. Celsus contributed to preserve, and Galen to improve the art, although each attached to it his own hypothesis. The system of Galen prevailed almost universally in Europe, when by that vast inundation of barbarians from the north,



science, the elegant arts and the Roman empire, were at once overwhelmed. During the long period in which Europe was benighted with Gothic ignorance, science took refuge among the Arabians, by whom the art was not only preserved, but enriched by the acquisition of some valuable simples, but more especially, by the development of chemical principles.

THE introduction of chemistry, a science which has displayed in the most vivid colours, the strength and the weakness of the human understanding, formed a new æra in the history of medicine. All the phenomena of the human body were resolved into chemical operations. Although the discoveries, which accompanied this system, were of the highest consequence to the healing art, the history of chemistry exhibits to us the extreme credulity and infatuation of Paracelsus and his disciples.

BETWEEN the chemical and the Cullenian system, we shall barely recognize the metaphysical theory of Stahl, and the mechanical doctrines of Bellini and Boerhaave. Cullen has successfully assailed the system of the schools at the time of his writing ; but so far as his theory is hypothetical, it is, no doubt, doomed to a similar fate with those which have preceded it.

It would be improper to withhold the tribute of gratitude and respect due to those characters, both of ancient and modern



dern times, who by their application and zeal, have distinguished themselves in the cause of science and mankind. For although in their history we can frequently discern a gross perversion of talents ; although they have often made facts to conform to, and support, their preconceived systems : Yet I presume it may be affirmed with truth, that in medicine, hypotheses have been estimated more highly in the schools, than in the chambers of the sick. The great Athenian physician, whom we have already had occasion to mention, so celebrated as an accurate observer of nature, always appeared to disadvantage when he attempted to theorize—and Sydenham, who has been recognized as the British Hippocrates, and who reprobated all speculative and hypothetical pursuits, is, at times, found to wander in the regions of visionary conjecture. Though adopting different doctrines in speculation, Boerhaave and Cullen, were both held in high estimation for their strict attention to the phenomena of nature, and skilful treatment of diseases. The great misfortune has been, that the talents of some of the most ingenious men have been exhausted, in the dark and illimitable regions of conjecture, while they might have been advantageously employed in the investigation of nature, and its laws, by the gradual but certain method of observation and experiment.

FROM the preceding, though cursory, view of the past state of the healing art, we have reason to felicitate ourselves on the pre-

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improvements in this interesting profession. Since the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Harvey, and the restoration of the Hippocratic method of improving the art, a total reform has taken place; and all theory, not resulting from observation, conformably to the Newtonian principles of philosophizing, is rejected as vain and delusive.

THE ancient Grecians, ever ambitious of great designs, and happy in expedients for their accomplishment, introduced the custom of exposing in places of public resort, such of their sick as were afflicted with diseases, which would not yield to ordinary remedies; that the unhappy sufferers might avail themselves of the information of those who had noticed the cure of similar diseases. The practice of modern times, though analogous, is more wise and efficacious. The establishment of philosophical, medical and humane societies, in Europe and the United States, has had a happy influence in calling forth the efforts of genius, in exciting to active and persevering diligence, and in diffusing their abundant fruits through the world. By the liberal and enlightened spirit which pervades and animates these institutions, knowledge has become the property, not of individuals or of particular associations, but of man.

To the influence of this spirit we are indebted for the existence of this society, and for the beneficial effects which have resulted therefrom.

THIS



THIS day, agreeably to the laws of this society, is appropriated for inviting the public attention to the benevolent objects of the establishment; and the presence of this assembly evinces the interest felt by the public in its prosperity. Indeed! the happy coincidence of moral and physical views, cannot fail to recommend the institution to the approbation and patronage of all, who wish to encourage either moral or philosophical improvement.

ON the subject which may be considered as the proximate cause of this institution, I disclaim any special information. So far as my knowledge enables me to speak, no discoveries have been made on the subject of resuscitation, but what are in your possession. I have witnessed several instances of drowning, both with and without reanimation; but as nothing occurred in the former, but what perfectly corresponds with similar instances on your records or files, I shall forbear their recital.

THE reanimation of bodies apparently dead, is one of the most interesting discoveries of modern times; and the success which has attended the process has been truly surprising. The subject has awakened the attention, and commanded the exertions, of the learned and humane in almost every civilized nation. Hence have originated societies for the highly laudable purpose of encouraging all persons, both by honorary and lucrative rewards, to attempt to rescue from  
destruction



destruction such as are *ready to perish*. But by this institution more extensive objects have been embraced, than are usually contemplated by similar societies in Europe ; and provision has been extended as far as possible, to furnish with the means of shelter and of comfort, the hardy and enterprizing seaman, whom accident or tempest may have destined to the perils and horrors of shipwreck. Happy institution ! Which while it is calculated to refine the benevolent principles of the heart, and to stimulate to physical research, addresses itself so powerfully to the love of fame, and even avarice itself, as to engage those selfish but influential passions in the cause of virtue, of science, and of humanity.



## APPENDIX.

*The Society have received the following Communications since their last Publication.*

### I.

*LETTER from Dr. HAWES, Register of the ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY in LONDON, to the CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.*

LONDON, June 7th, 1794.

SIR.

**I** BEG your Acceptance of the Annual Report, and request the favor of you to present the others to the friends of the Massachusetts Humane Society.—I flatter myself that you, and the candid part of mankind will peruse this annual tribute of Humanity, *Corde benigno*.

The Managers of the Royal Humane Society desired me to return you their thanks for the Rev. Mr. Clarke's ingenious Discourse, and the same are due from myself. Be assured that I most ardently wish prosperity to the Massachusetts Humane Society; and particularly health, happiness and long life to you, and the friends of that philanthropic and noble Institution.

Your's most respectfully,

WILLIAM HAWES.

*Rev. Dr. Parker, Corresponding Secretary  
to the Massachusetts Humane Society.*

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### II.

PLYMOUTH, Sept. 29th, 1794.

**O**N, or about the first instant, Capt. B. Churchill, an aged man, passing near the lower bridge in this town, was accosted by a child, and told that a boy was in the water. Capt. Churchill looking from the wharf, observed a hat swimming on the water, but nothing more; and the child which accosted him being very young, he could obtain from him no particular



ticular information. He immediately made an outcry, and Mr. B. Hedge, jun. with two persons who were at work for him in a neighbouring store, repaired to the spot. It was nearly high water, and the bottom could not be discerned. While they were earnestly looking a bubble was perceived to rise from the bottom. *Dolphin Garler*, a negro man (one of the persons at work with Mr. Hedge) instantly dived down at the spot from whence the bubble ascended. He rose without the boy. He plunged again and brought him up. It proved to be the son of Mr. George Churchill. There were no signs of life in him when first brought on shore. He was at first rubbed on the back with a woollen garment. It was urged by some persons present, that he should be rolled on a cask. This was opposed by others. But he was finally rolled—He was then conveyed to a neighbouring house; but before he reached the house some signs of life appeared, and in a short time afterwards, under the care of Dr. Thacher he was perfectly recovered, and *delivered to his mother*.

The Boy was about eight years of age. It cannot be ascertained how long he was in the water, as no person saw him fall, but the child above-mentioned. It is judged however, that he was under water at least ten minutes.

The exertions of *Dolphin* were prompt and spirited, and happily successful. These circumstances are collected and certified, that the Trustees of the Humane Society may be enabled to determine whether, according to the rules of the Society, he is entitled to a reward.

JOHN DAVIS,  
JAMES THACHER,  
ISAAC LOTHROP,  
CHANDLER ROBBINS.

To the Hon. President, and Trustees of the  
HUMANE SOCIETY of *Massachusetts*.

*N. B.* The above Representation being made by some of the most respectable characters in *Plymouth*, the Trustees ordered a reward of Ten Dollars to be paid to the said *Dolphin Garler*.

To



## III.

To the MASSACHUSETTS HUMANE SOCIETY.

GENTLEMEN,

**P**ERMIT me to lay before you the following relation of an unsuccessful attempt to recover a drowned person ; together with some remarks on the circumstances of the unhappy accident.—The person was a young man belonging to this town, aged 21. He was drowned at Butler's ferry, June 21st, 1794.

He had been somewhat unwell the day before his death ; and in the morning immediately preceeding it, beside other symptoms of indisposition, he complained of a pain in his side. By his own choice he was allowed to tend the ferry, which the gentleman owned with whom he lived, instead of going to labour in the field. He had crossed the river several times in the course of the forenoon, and was returning with a couple of female passengers, who perceived his countenance to alter considerably by the way : they had nearly reached the shore, when one of the ladies observed a particular wildness in the look of his eyes, and some inconsistency of conduct ; and soon after, he *jumped* (as it was said) with his oar, from the boat into the water. Instead of alternately sinking and rising in the usual manner, he continued floating with his head above the water for the space of two or three minutes, or longer, and then sunk to the bottom. It is said by his parents and persons with whom he lived, that he had been subject to fainting fits ; and I think it very probable he was going into one of these, or some one worse, when he jumped from the boat : I conclude so from his having been unwell ; from the sudden alteration of his countenance ; from his jumping overboard, which he certainly would not have done had he had his senses at that time ; and more especially, from his continuing above the water, after he had jumped in, instead of sinking : He could not have continued above the water, in the manner he did, had not the fit that was coming on put a stop to his breathing, for he was no swimmer. It is said he continued under water about ten minutes, \* and perhaps it was nearly as long again before any thing could be done for his recovery : But

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\* And for several reasons I am inclined to think he did much longer.



proper assistance was immediately called for, and the means found generally useful in such cases were most diligently employed for nearly three hours ; when no signs of life appearing he was given over.†

It was expected by many, that he might be restored to life ; and the short time he was in the water, together with the advantages that offered for the use of our best endeavours, I must confess, seemed to flatter such an expectation ; but the condition he was in when he jumped from the boat, I think rendered his case particularly desperate.

It is well known that submersion proves fatal by producing suffocation ; suffocation, or a cessation of the action of respiration, however occasioned,‡ always brings on an apoplectic state of the brain, or a preternatural congestion of blood in the vessels of the head. The manner in which suffocation produces this effect is well known to Anatomists and Physiologists, and needs no explanation here, as mentioning the fact is sufficient for my present purpose.

What would be the particular effects of submersion on the system of a person, already under a partial degree of suffocation and apoplexy from any other cause, I do not know : But I think the most obvious conclusion is, that a greater degree of congestion would be induced, than from submersion when the system was entire.

When the young man jumped from the boat, I suppose he was going into a fit of some kind, and consequently, that he was more or less apoplectic ; or that the condition he was in was particularly favourable to a congestion of blood in the vessels of the brain ; and by the additional hurtful effects of the water, such a morbid degree of apoplexy was produced

† *The Methods of Treatment* recommended by the Massachusetts and other Humane Societies were as exactly followed as we were capable of.—As we had no Fumigator a common pipe was used, but with no advantage that I could perceive, as we could throw up no smoke with it.—Before any physician had arrived, some person had opened a vein in the arm, from which there was a small effusion of blood during the whole process.

‡ Hanging by the neck ; fainting, hysteric, epileptic, and other fits ; all disagreeable odours ; the noxious vapours arising from burning charcoal ; from some metals when calcining ; from fermenting wine, &c. the mephitic air (or the *fire* and *choak-damps* as they are called) of caverns, deep wells, and coalpits ; and many other things produce suffocation and apoplexy, and sometimes immediate death.



duced as rendered every endeavour, however assiduously employed for his recovery, ineffectual. This I offer with diffidence, as my opinion, and I am the more especially inclined to ascribe our failure to some particular fatality in the case, as the prospect of success in every other respect, was truly promising.

Before we had finished our operations, the face became very livid, and the Abdomen much tumefied; and soon after the corse was laid out, there came on a large profusion of blood from the nose, which continued to increase for several hours: At length the blood issued also from the mouth and eyes, and the latter were very tumid—the whole presenting a most horrid spectacle. The body also purged considerably—and at the time of the funeral (which was the next afternoon) on account of the ghastly appearance and the offensive stench that accompanied, it was thought prudent that the corse should not be seen.

I am sorry that I am obliged to acknowledge this to be a second instance of fatal submersion that has happened in this town, within the space of about ten months, notwithstanding the most indefatigable exertions for reanimation in both cases.

Whether this must be attributed to our directions not being given and executed with judgment and propriety; or to the unfavourable circumstances of the former case, and to what I have conjectured in the latter, I am not able to say: This however I am conscious of, we did as well as we knew how.

As I have spoken of the other case, I cannot well forbear giving a detail of it. The person was a young man, of a vigorous, robust habit of body, about 22 years of age. He was drowned upwards of a 100 rods above Tucker's Ferry, in this town, in the first of the evening—Sept. 1793.—He was in a bathing, with but one companion; and wading beyond his length, became unable to help himself (as he was no swimmer) and sunk to the bottom in the usual manner. He necessarily remained in the water till his companion had obtained help, by calling, sufficient to take a *teamboat* from the opposite shore, at the ferry-place, up against the stream to where he was; and then they were not able immediately to take him up. In the mean time (for want of proper directions) fire was taken from the ferryman's house on the eastern shore, and carried to where the young man was taken out of the river on the western shore, for the purpose of building a fire, by the side of which, on the cold ground, and in the cool air, (for it was quite cool that evening) he



he was suffered to lie till Dr. Carigain and myself arrived ; we covered him as well as we could with some loose cloathes, and ordered him to be carried directly to the ferryman's house, where by the application of warm cloths and continued frictions, we excited a degree of warmth equal to the natural, in all the external parts, and kept them in that condition for nearly four hours, using every other means to the best of our judgment—but to no purpose.

As a principle of humanity and benevolence was the only motive that induced me to offer this paper to the Humane Society, I fancy they will require no apology for the many inaccuracies which, without doubt, it contains.

Impressed with sentiments of the highest veneration and esteem for this and all other philanthropic institutions,

I am, with respect, Gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

RICHARD HAZELTINE, jun.

*Concord, (N. H.) November 29, 1794.*

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#### IV.

BOSTON, *November 7, 1794.*

GENTLEMEN,

**I** HAVE the honour to transmit to you a vote of the Trustees of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ; granting seventy two dollars, for the purpose of erecting two huts in the most exposed places on your Island, for the purpose of preserving the lives of those who may be unfortunately shipwrecked on that shore.

The Trustees request the favour of the Selectmen, to point out the most exposed places, to contract for, and superintend the building these huts, and to see them constantly supplied with a tinder-box, hatchet, dry fuel, a few candles, and dry sea weed. Whatever expence they may be at, not exceeding the above sum, they will please to draw for on the Rev. Dr. Howard, Treasurer of the Society, and their draft will be honoured at sight.

The



The Trustees flatter themselves, that the principles of humanity and benevolence, will be sufficient to induce the Selectmen of Nantucket, to undertake this business, which may be the means, under Providence, of saving the lives of many of our fellow creatures,

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most humble servant,

S. PARKER, Corresponding Secretary.

The SELECTMEN of *Nantucket*.

V.

NANTUCKET, *December 10, 1794.*

RESPECTED SIR,

WE have to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 7th ult. inclosing a vote of the Humane Society, granting the sum of Seventy-two dollars, for the purpose of erecting two Huts on our Island, for the preservation of the lives of any Seamen, who may be unfortunately cast on shore. We admire the benevolent principles by which the society are actuated, and most chearfully have entered upon that part of the business assigned us by the Trustees; we have pointed out the most suitable places, have procured the materials, and contracted for the building the said huts, one of which is nearly compleated, the other will be built soon; we have agreeably to your instructions drawn on the Rev. Dr. Howard for seventy two dollars, the sum stipulated by the Trustees; the bills will considerably exceed that sum, owing to the remote situation said houses occupy, and the high price of lumber here at this time; but the deficiency we will readily supply, and will take care they shall be constantly supplied with necessaries, and kept in good repair.

We have the honour to be with due respect to the Society, the Trustees, and yourself,

SIR,

Your very humble Servants,

TRISTRAM HUSSEY,

OBED HUSSEY,

JOHN PINKHAM,

SILVANUS MACY, jun.

WILLIAM HAMMATT,

} Select-Men  
of  
*Nantucket.*

*Mr. Samuel Parker, Secretary to the  
Humane Society of Massachusetts.*



## VI.

*To the President and Trustees of the HUMANE SOCIETY.*

GENTLEMEN,

I Was called to visit *A. F.* on Sunday the 21st of February last at 6 o'clock, P. M. who, I found, had taken 20 grains of crude opium at 3 o'clock, P. M. of the same day, this not having the expected effect; at half after four he took 9 grains more, with a design of destroying his life as he declared, and thinking he had taken enough to effect his purpose had sent for two of his friends to take his leave of them. They immediately applied to me. As soon as I had seen him and understood the state of the case, I proposed to administer to his relief; but he strenuously refused to take any thing, avowing that his intention was to deprive himself of life; asserting that he was a free agent, and that, as such, he had a right to free himself from the calamities which he suffered; and that no one should interfere to prevent the accomplishment of his object; and that he would take nothing from me, as I had no right to compel him to take medicine against his will. I maintained that he had, according to his own confession, attempted to commit a crime against society and to deprive it of one of its members; that his life was the property of society; and that as one of it I owed it as a duty, in common with every other individual, to prevent, as far as I had it in my power, any injury which I saw coming upon it by the destruction of any of its members; in consequence of which I should, if he persisted in his refusal of the medicine I intended to give him, compel him to take it; at length I prevailed on him to take the dose, which was eight grains of tartar emetic, which not having any effect in 20 minutes, was followed by eight grains more; this not operating in 20 minutes, I dissolved half a dram of salt of vitriol in hot water, this is known to be a powerful emetic, and to be given only in cases of extremity, where the system requires a speedy and powerful remedy; having taken it he soon after began to puke, and discharged very large quantities from his stomach; amongst the matter discharged, I found one piece of crude opium of about 6 grains weight; but not thinking this sufficient, I gave him another half dram of salt of vitriol, upon which he puked again very largely, till he had emptied his stomach. Before this medicine began to operate he complained of dizziness and general distress, and requested  
with



with great importunity to be let alone, and allowed to lay on the bed, and not to be kept in motion, as I had directed from my first seeing him, thinking that if torpor began it would be impossible to rouse him; and as he had no command of his limbs, I directed his being kept in motion by the assistance of a number of men. Having seen but a little while before two cases of this kind where sleep had taken place, and every effort to rouse the patients had been ineffectual, I considered it of great importance in the present case, although he complained much of our cruelty in not suffering him to lay on the bed, declaring that the efforts we made gave him extreme distress. I left him about 8 o'clock, desiring that his friends would remain with him through the night, and not allow him to sleep. Having directed 4 ounces of tincturæ sacrae and 2 ounces of castor oil to be given at two different periods, both of which I found in the morning he had puked up, and complained of a severe head ach; I prescribed another ounce of castor oil, which operated in the forenoon, and he recovered perfectly in the course of the day.

It is not common that either the physician or the friends have it in their power to determine the quantity of the drug, nor the time when it was taken; but as we could determine both these points, it was one of my inducements for communicating this case. In one of those which I hinted at above, which proved fatal, neither the time or dose could be determined; but in the other, which also terminated fatally, the dose taken was half an ounce of liquid laudanum at 11 o'clock in the evening, but its effect was not known till four the next morning, and it was not till 5 that I saw her, when I in vain attempted by every stimulant in my power to rouse her from her fatal sleep. This was a period of seven hours. The time which elapsed in the case which is the subject of the present communication, from his taking the first dose to my seeing him, was three hours.

An opinion has prevailed, that acids, administered after a large dose of opium had been taken and operated, would correct its dangerous properties; to this I cannot subscribe, for to me it appears evident, that the acid can only have the power of rendering the nerves of the stomach upon which it acts, as well as the opium, insensible to the operation of that remedy; this the acid cannot effect after the opium has operated upon the coats of the stomach. To satisfy any one let him make as  
many

many experiments as he pleases, it will be found, that the acid, if given after the opium begins to operate, will not have the smallest power of correcting it's dangerous properties. This error no doubt has arisen from observing, that vinegar drank before a large dose of opium has been taken, will in a considerable degree prevent the usual effects of the medicine ; but it ought not to be relied on as a remedy against a large dose of opium, particularly to the exclusion of the *most active emetics*.

I am, &c.

T. WELSH.

*Boston, March 2, 1795.*



## D O N A T I O N.

**I**TEM, I give and bequeath to the *Massachusetts Humane Society* the Sum of *Fifty Pounds* Lawful Money.

A true Extract from the last Will of Mrs. *Saviah Thayer*, late of *Boston*, deceased.

Attest:

RICHARD W. COOPER, *Clk Prob.*



PREMIUMS



*PREMIUMS* adjudged by the *TRUSTEES*.

**T**HE Trustees, with pleasure, announce to the public the exertions of such of their fellow citizens, as have been instrumental in saving from death, a number of persons, who must otherwise inevitably have perished; and as a reward, for such exertions, the following premiums have been adjudged since June 1794.

		Doll. Cts.
1794.		
July,	To Edward Holland and Joshua Otis, for saving the life of George Wallis, - - - -	2
Aug.	To Narius Townsend for saving the life of Sukey Keene,	2
	To William Oliver for saving a child of Mr. John Fisher,	2
	To James Withington for a child of Alice Bruce, - -	3
	To John Dodge and Joshua Coleman for saving the life of Thomas Upshell by taking him up at sea, -	3
Sept.	To Jedidiah Currier for saving a child of Mr. James Price from drowning. - - -	3
	To Ebenezer Waters for saving from drowning a child of Mr. Jacob Smith, - - -	2
	To Simeon Skilling and Joseph Starr for saving the life of Edward Wentworth when in danger of drowning,	6
	To Isaac Dupée for a child of Capt. Merry, -	2
Octob.	To Mrs. Hoskins for receiving into her house the lifeless body of Hannah Bell, - -	2
	To Prudence Cleever for saving John Chowden,	2
	To Mitchel Lincoln and David Cole for saving the life of a person who had fallen into the mill creek,	2
	To Thomas Aves for saving the life of Micah Orcutt,	4
	To Dolphin Garler for saving the life of a child of Mr. George Churchill of Plymouth, -	10
1795.		
Jan.	To John Plumley for saving the life of William Brenton at Foster's wharf, - - -	1 50
	To John Fovell, George Dunton and John Brown for saving the life of a son of Mr. Parker, who had fallen through the ice in the mill creek, -	17
April,	To John Walker for saving the life of Ebenezer Griffin, who was nearly drowned, - -	4
	To John Carman, Nathaniel Robbins and Abiel Pierce for saving the life of Rhoda Hardy, who plunged into the water at West Boston bridge, -	5
	And to Daniel Tracy for receiving the said Rhoda Hardy into his house and assisting in her recovery, -	2

**D**

Premiums adjudged, 74 50



		Doll.	Cts.
	Brought over,	74	50
1794,	To the Organist and Sexton of Brattle-street church,	7	
June,	Printing Mr. Barnard's discourse, and Mr. Andrews's account for binding in marble 50 of the same,	32	25
	To the Selectmen of Nantucket for building two huts on said Island,	72	
	To Cash for 437 dollars and 23 cents State notes, at 14s. per pound,	306	8
	To cash paid the messenger for warning the meetings of the Trustees and semiannual meeting, delivering discourses, collecting subscriptions, &c. &c.	30	
	Balance in the Treasurer's hands,	538	12
		<hr/>	<hr/>
	Dollars,	1059	95

*Contra Credit.*

1794,	By balance of last year's account,	278	52
	By collection at the semiannual meeting in June,	85	73
	By interest of funded stock,	65	28
Dec. 30.	By subscriptions paid to this day,	89	12
1795,	By interest of funded stock,	79	49
	By subscriptions to June 1st,	261	16
	By Mrs. Saviah Thayer's legacy,	166	67
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1025	97

*Malden Bridge Account.*

	By balance of last year's account,	4	84
	One year's interest funded stock,	6	64
	One year's dividend,	22	50
		<hr/>	<hr/>
	Dollars,	1059	95

*Property of the Society.*

	6 per cent. stock,	1442	17
	3 per cent. ditto,	708	83
	Deferred ditto,	334	58
	Union Bank shares,	368	
	Massachusetts 5 per cent. stock,	568	56
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		3422	14

THE above appears to be the state of the Treasurer's  
accounts as audited by *Ebenezer Storer* and *William*  
*Scollay, Esq's*, June 8, 1795. Since which he has  
purchased 5 per cent. stock to the amount of - -  
The above certificates are in his hands and the evidence  
of one share in Malden bridge.

1000

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4422 14

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*Summary of the Method of Treatment to be used with persons  
apparently dead from drowning.*

**C**ONVEY the person to the nearest convenient house, with his head raised:—Strip and dry him as quick as possible; clean the mouth and nostrils from froth and mud—if a child, let him be placed between two persons naked, in a hot bed—If an adult, lay him on a hot blanket or bed, and, in cold weather, near a fire—in warm weather, the air should be freely admitted into the room.—The body is next to be gently rubbed with warm woollen cloths sprinkled with spirits, if at hand, otherwise dry:—A heated warming-pan may be now lightly moved over the back, properly covered with a blanket—and the body, if of a child, is to be gently shook every few minutes:—Whilst these means are using, one or two assistants are to be employed in blowing up tobacco smoke into the fundament, with the instrument provided for the purpose, or a tobacco-pipe, if that cannot be had—the bowl filled with tobacco, and properly lighted, being covered with a handkerchief, or piece of linen, so as to defend the mouth of the assistant in blowing: Bathe the breast with hot rum, and persist in the use of these means for several hours. If no signs of life should then appear, let the body be kept warm several hours longer, with hot bricks, or vessels of hot water, applied to the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet, and this for a longer or shorter time, as the circumstances of the case may dictate.

✍ The Trustees of the HUMANE SOCIETY of the Commonwealth of *Massachusetts* have procured five sets of TOBACCO MACHINES, for the recovery of persons apparently dead, from drowning, suffocation, &c. and have deposited them, for the relief of the unfortunate, in several parts of the town of *Boston*; one with Dr. *L. Hayward*, in Newbury-Street—another with Dr. *Warren*, in South School-Street—a third with Dr. *Dexter*, in Milk-Street—a fourth with Dr. *Townsend*, Middle-street—and the fifth with the Rev. Dr. *Lathrop*, North-Square.





